



the AASB

The Alabama Association of School Boards



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Update & Request from Alabama's K-12 Public Schools

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The Alabama Association of School Boards seeks your leadership to help us make the future brighter for all children. We understand legislative leaders want Alabama to deliver on its promise of a brighter future. We're here to help. Local school boards work alongside you to accomplish the public's highest priority – educating our children.

Here's how Congress can help:

Pass the Economic Stimulus Package

- The American Recovery and Investment Act of 2008 splits \$825 billion by targeting nearly two-thirds to direct spending and the remaining one-third in a variety of tax cuts.
- For K-12 education, Alabama's share totals just over \$1.2 billion. Some \$585 million would be fiscal stabilization funds to be allocated to local school districts according to the state education foundation program formula. In addition, the state would receive \$643 million in direct program funding for the following: Title I, Special Education (IDEA), Education Technology and school construction.

Fulfill Promise of Funding

- Congress must honor its promise to fund its mandates. For the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Congress is only funding 17.2 percent, far short of the 40 percent promised. Alabama receives \$189 million in IDEA funding, but was promised \$444 million. The perpetual shortfall means school systems must redirect funding from all students.
- Title I grants and related programs have been underfunded by more than \$65 billion since NCLB was enacted in 2002.

No Child Left Behind Act: Reauthorization with Revisions Needed

- Congress will soon decide whether to draft new legislation with major reforms to education or simply to modify the now 7-year-old No Child Left Behind Act. Alabama educators know that in its current form, NCLB's framework does not fairly assess our students or schools' performance. The implementation of the law has demonstrated real flaws that are hurting public education.



- Our primary areas of focus to reform include: **assessments; adequate yearly progress (AYP); and sanctions.**
- AASB supports the National School Boards Association's legislative reform bill (H.R. 648 in the 110th Congress) which was co-sponsored by Rep. Jo Bonner and Rep. Terry Everett.

Strengthen Teacher Quality

- Teacher quality is the single most important factor for student achievement. Local school boards must have strategies that work to attract and qualify highly effective teachers under NCLB.
- Alabama needs assistance to address the recruitment and retention challenges and the inequitable distribution of effective teachers between high and low poverty schools.
- Congress can help by providing incentives to help recruit, retain and reward effective teachers in schools that need them, and for subjects with shortages. In addition, we seek support for alternative routes to certification to broaden the pool of new teacher candidates.

Protect the Medicaid Administrative Claiming (MAC) Program

- Alabama schools risk losing over \$18 million local annually. Congress has an opportunity to secure a lasting solution to prevent the administration from cutting Medicaid reimbursements to local schools for their costs to provide school-based services to low-income children with disabilities.
- Congressional action has delayed the implementation of CMS-2287 from implementing cuts through April 2008. Further Congressional action is needed to rescind the rule and clarify in statute local schools' authority to claim for school-based Medicaid expenses.

Improving and Expanding Early Education Programs

- Alabama's 4-year-olds number 59,000, yet less than 13,000 of them will receive pre-kindergarten education through state-funded, federal Head Start, or special education preschool programs.
- Alabama is ranked #1 in the nation for its quality of pre-kindergarten programs, meeting or exceeding all 10 of the National Institute for Early Education Research's quality standards.
- Fewer than 6% of the state's children are able to participate in the excellent program, ranking it near the bottom of the nation in terms of outreach. The benefits of the program are well-known and the public supports pre-K efforts.
- AASB fully supports expanding preschool opportunities so children come to kindergarten ready to learn.